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ABSTRACT

This paper is an edited transcript of a panel discussion which took place at an educational conference about the current state of popular culture studies at American colleges and universities. First touching on the number of university media departments being disbanded in general across the country, the discussion focuses on several questions: whether popular culture studies are, in fact, under attack at universities; whether there is any connection between recent cutbacks and the conservative critique of higher education; how widespread are eliminations, proposed eliminations, and actual downsizing in programs of interest to those in popular culture studies; whether cutbacks are disproportionately directed against certain programs (such as library science, media studies, speech communication, women's studies, etc.); to what extent program cuts address real problems, or would less draconian measures address problems equally as well; whether tenure denials and other indirect means are used for the purpose of preventing growth of departments and disciplines; the role of administrators in causing or preventing elimination; and what should be the proper response of the faculty and of professional organizations to program cuts. Each member on the discussion panel in turn recounts his or her particular experiences with the subject in question and how things have played out on the campus with which he or she is familiar. (NKA)

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Popular Culture Studies Under Attack at American Universities

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This is an edited transcript of a panel presented at the conference of the American Culture Association, New Orleans, April 11, 1993.

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Popular Culture Studies Under Attack at American Universities

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Gary Burns:

I had the idea for this panel because it seems to me that media studies and library science, in particular, are suffering very hard hits at universities. I wanted to have a discussion about this at ACA/PCA [American Culture Association/Popular Culture Association], first of all to get other people's opinions as to whether that's true (and if it's true, why it's true) and also whether the problem is more general than what I've noticed about media studies and library science. In other words, are other kinds of departments experiencing problems, too? Just a few days ago I got some information about <u>another</u> department of radio, television, and motion pictures being disbanded, this one at the University of North Carolina. It's the latest in a fairly long series that seems to be accumulating. So I do think something's going on. And it was my purpose in putting together the panel to see whether other people think that's true also.

We have four panelists. Beth Kizer is in the Communication Department at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, where I also

worked a few years ago. Beth has been the Chair there and has seen a number of changes in the department. Charles Harpole is Head of the Film and Animation Program at the University of Central Florida, in Orlando, and has seen a large number of calamities going on across the country in various media studies departments. Peggy Sullivan [was the Executive Director of the American Library Association from 1992 to 1994 and is now (1997) an associate with Tuft & Associates, an executive search firm in Chicago. She] is well-placed to know what's going on in library science across the country. Jackie Donath is in Humanities at California State University, Sacramento. As you're all aware, I'm sure, the Cal State system has been particularly hard-hit by budget cuts recently.

The questions I sent to the panelists as items they might want to discuss are these:

Are popular culture studies (broadly defined) under attack at American universities?

Is there any connection between recent cutbacks and the conservative critique of higher education (by Bloom, D'Souza, and others)?

How widespread are eliminations, proposed eliminations, and other types of actual or proposed downsizing in programs of interest to ACA and PCA members?

Are cutbacks disproportionately directed against certain programs (such as library science, media studies, speech, women's studies, etc.)?

What are the effects, in both the short and long term, of program eliminations and other cutbacks on faculty, students, and the public?

To what extent do program cuts address real problems?

Are there less draconian measures that would address the problems equally well?

To what extent are tenure denials and other indirect means used for the purpose of preventing the growth of programs, departments, and disciplines?

What is the proper role, and the actual role, of administrators at all levels in causing or preventing program eliminations?

What is the proper response of the faculty to program cuts (including faculty in other departments and on other campuses)?

What should professional organizations be doing to respond to program cuts?

Those are some of the things that I hope our panel will address. With that, let me turn it over to our first speaker, Beth Kizer.

Elizabeth Kizer:

I came into academia very naive. It was my second profession. I was a good, '50s-role-model mother first. Then I finally went into academia as a professional. I came with all those assumptions that I had learned in school in the '40s and

'50s that this is the land of equality and that we don't have a hierarchy of status-symbol departments; that knowledge for knowledge's sake is a good thing; that one of our primary purposes in educating students is to teach them to become good citizens, good taxpayers, people who will be broadly educated and who will vote and keep our democracy going.

It was only after I entered academia that I found a subtle hierarchy that I'm not sure everybody is really aware of--a hierarchy of what is proper education and what is not. I'd like to talk about three different categories of departments that are low in the hierarchy and that get axed easily. The three categories are those departments that are Johnny-come-latelies, those that are too costly, and those that are not politically correct.

Sometimes a department will fit all three of those categories. The one I'm most familiar with, of course, is communication. I hear people say frequently that we're Johnny-come-latelies, that we just evolved suddenly, like Topsy coming out from under a rock one day. Even our own students are not forced to take history of communication studies anymore, so they don't know the history of the field. Deans I talk to don't know that we're a very old discipline, that Aristotle and Socrates and Plato and Quintilian all were involved in teaching young men (because that's who got educated) how to communicate in a pure democracy, how to become good speakers. Somewhere along the line that history got lost, along with the fact that the first

universities established in the United States taught rhetoric (that is, public speaking). To graduate, you had to present a long speech in Latin. You couldn't get your degree until you were able to present a speech--in other words, until you were well-trained in speech communication.

So while I hear other people talk about how we just evolved suddenly, I know that that isn't the case. At some universities, we're thought of as something that evolved along with football games, evidently. And it doesn't seem to be "okay" to study something current. It's not glorified. It's only "okay" to study the past. I know a woman who gets her pay increases for her Emily Dickinson studies. She also studies the poetry of Bruce Springsteen as a kind of hobby. That doesn't carry the same weight as Dickinson, and yet Bruce Springsteen seems to have a lot more influence than Dickinson on most of the students I know.

We've had vast slashes in budgets for anything that looks current--radio, TV, film, performance. Anything with performance involved is costly, so it's only okay to study Shakespeare if it's from a book. Of course, we know Shakespeare didn't write to be read from a book, but to be performed. Yet it's too costly, and after all how many students will actually be able to get employment in theatre today? So let's only give students things that are votechy.

You see, on one hand we've got the idea that it's not "okay" to teach contemporary things. On the other hand, we've got to

teach some such things to make sure that students can go over to the placement center and have a direct route into a job. So the fields I see targeted most often are things like popular culture studies, sometimes social work.

In my own department, we've stopped teaching very much about production in radio-TV, and we were never allowed to teach production of film. We can't do theatre anymore. At first we were only going to curtail performances, because we just don't have enough students majoring in theatre to justify the high cost of productions. We went from just not doing productions all the way to ripping that out of our department and putting it back in English where people can just read about it in a book.

Modern foreign languages on our campus are being squeezed so that no longer will students have to take three or four semesters of foreign language. Instead we'll just give them a brief exposure to the grammar of another language, and then they can study the culture of the foreign country.

Urban studies is being squeezed. American studies is being squeezed. Music is okay as long as you're looking at it as a historical object--let's not study today's music and certainly let's not teach people how to play it.

All along the line we keep seeing things trimmed away and trimmed away and wonder what effect that has on the people we're supposed to be training to be good citizens and voters of the future. But then you hear people say there's just no money, and taxpayers don't want to pay any more taxes, and we've got to cut

down somewhere. That sounds like a justification for cheating students out of the things that we got and that they ought to get.

And there's no clear plan presented to us. We're not giving students who are planning to go into teaching the kinds of courses they need so that they'll know what to do when they have to direct a high school play. On campuses we see the elimination of graduate programs, so that a state will not offer any graduate program, perhaps, in radio-TV-film. Anyone in that state who desires to get a higher degree in that area has to go someplace else.

And yet we talk about being land-grant institutions and the fact that we have an obligation to serve the people in our community and to give them everything that they might want. It's political, it seems to me. It's not infrequent that we hear we can't get any raises in a year. At one time we faced a proposal to eliminate whole departments, but departments then were not into cannibalism. We've gone past that now into wearing blinders--"as long as it's not in my department, I don't want to be worried about it." I heard a woman on a search committee say she didn't care whom we hired to be head of another department because she wasn't going to have to work with the person. Unless we become involved enough in our own community to care about whom we're adopting as cousins in another department, then that presents a real problem.

Last but not least, anything that smacks of women's studies or minority studies is "politically correct," so there's been pressure on universities to offer those things. But all of a sudden they find their staff removed or their funding removed or their office moved around campus several times so that students can't find where they are. Or they're not on the schedule very often anymore. There are subtle ways that we push things back in the corner and try not to fund them. It seems to me that people who are not in areas that are steeped with historical reasons for existing, like English literature or history, are in jeopardy. If you lop off this other arm over here, I may be the next arm that gets lopped off.

Charles Harpole:

I'm going to start out with my favorite horror story, which our panel organizer insisted that I tell, and I tell it with kind of black delight. I went to Ohio State University as their new Chair of Photography and Cinema and met the outgoing Acting Chair, who was the "receiver" at that time. His expertise was in theatre. He had been Vice President, Dean, various kinds of assistant whatevers, department chair, full professor. I said: "You know, you've been through the whole mill. What kind of advice can you give me as I come into this department, which is not exactly the most tranquil one already?" I thought he said humorously the following piece of advice. He said find out what

each of your faculty members wants the most and then specifically deny it to them. Make sure that they know that you know you are denying it to them, to assert your authority.

Well, I laughed because I thought the guy was kidding. And I said that: "You've got to be kidding!" Administrator X proposed straight-faced to tell me in the end he was not kidding; and Administrator X meant it and apparently had practiced it. I went on to see some of the most venal treatment of people that I've ever seen, that I thought I would ever see. I thought I had heard bad stories. I thought this was a novel that I was going through, but what I saw instead was really a two-tier system--a class of administrators and a class of faculty.

When you have a group of people who are attracted to the scholarly and the teaching life and the librarian life, these are not people who particularly are killers, who particularly want to go for the jugular. I mean, here we are in this room. We're not interested in being corporate demons, so we're attracted to the rather reticent lifestyle. Then we find ourselves, in that lifestyle with the ideals that we hold so dear, trying to practice those ideals under administrations whose ideals have totally moved away from those standards. Now we're operating in an entirely different sphere.

It seems to me that one of the crises in American education, higher education particularly, is a crisis in the new class of academic called the professional administrator. Now, we all know that one of the few ways to get a decent raise in higher

education is to take a job as an administrator. You can get a decent raise if you do that. It's literally the only way. Moving from one rank to another, like assistant to associate to full, those are two or three thousand bucks apart. If you're talking about a real "let's put a down payment on a house" type of raise, you've got to get an administrative job.

As soon as you put people in that situation, you begin to pollute and corrupt those good old ideals that we all got into this profession for. You begin to think, "Gee, I've got to work for money, first and foremost." So you create an elite class of citizenry in academia, those who are paid more for doing what ultimately is of questionable additional value. How can you say administration is worth more than teaching, for God's sake?

And yet we do, and we put up with it. It's amazing. Now, as soon as you get that raise and you get that administrative job, you're locked in. Now your lifestyle goes up, your bank account goes up, the cost of your car, your house, your children's education. . . . All of a sudden you find you're a career administrator, because your next job is not going to be a professor. It's going to be administering somewhere else, and then perhaps administering at a higher level at a greater salary, and so on and so on.

Our dean at a modest little campus in Orlando gets $110,000 for twelve months. This is to be a dean. His wife, who came on with us as a trailing spouse, gets $54,000 for nine months, plus a summer, so she's pulling down at least $60,000-$65,000.

Together that's a fairly decent middle-class lifestyle. In this spot they can't go back, so what happens is the creation of a class of professional administrators. This creates an administrative thought process, because the administrators then think of themselves as administrators. They begin to leave the faculty, and faculty concerns, and educators' concerns and begin to think about the most important factor in their life, which is keeping that position, keeping that job.

What I've found in my experience, some 20-odd years in higher education, as I'm sure all of you have found, is that administrators get to the point where they are much better at keeping their jobs than they are at doing their jobs. So you find people again and again making decisions based on "what will keep me in this spot" rather than what is the right thing to do.

When we're talking about--as we all are--these budget cuts and how we're going to cope with the future and reduced citizen and taxpayer support and all that, what we're talking about is a set of decisions that are going to come to campuses--"Here's your dollar allotment, do with it as you can, but make your own decisions." The decision-makers, of course, are the academic administrators, and that's why I want to concentrate on them, because it's in their hands that we, the faculty, have put a lot of the power to make decisions over our lives and over our programs and the kind of quality that we can offer our students. That's why I want to talk about administrators to such an extent.

The first question is, how do you administer in an academic setting? I had the remarkable, delightful experience of meeting Gil Cates, the guy who directs and produces the Oscar show every year. Gil Cates had just taken the job as Chair of the film department at UCLA, and he looked at the three or four of us there who had come for a seminar about academic administration. He said, you know, how the hell do you administer in this kind of setting? He said: "We have people on this faculty who are tenured and they're never going to leave and they hate each other and they're fighting forever and I can't fire them. What do you do?"

Here was an outsider who had come in with a lot of experience managing people--effectively, I'm sure--looking at this situation and practically throwing up his hands. It seems to me that our problem is the problem of an administrative model, if you're taking one of these administrative jobs and you're brand new. I had that experience a few years ago. You look around and say: "How do I behave in this setting? What are my models? Where are my mentors?"

Well, your mentors are covering their behinds. They're not interested in telling you anything, and your models are nonexistent. You remember that kindly old professor who took the chair job out of reluctance?--people with their hands in the middle of his back, saying: "Go on, Joe, you've got to take it for a couple of years. It's your turn." Those were the grand old days. Joe would do the thing out of duty and get back to the

classroom as soon as he could. Of course, those days are gone, so where is the model?

I think that in the absence of a proper model, what academic administrators have seized on is the model of the corporate administrator. The corporate model has, I think, almost totally invaded academia. That invasion has set us up, as I say, with these two classes of citizens. The corporate model--that is, the post-World War II model--is extremely hierarchical. My dean at the campus where I am now told me in a confidential tone, his metaphorical arm around my shoulders: "Son, you just can't treat everybody alike!" What he was telling me, of course, was: "Get with the program, guy, and recognize that there's a hierarchy here, and that you must obey and fall into the patterns of expectation for the hierarchy."

The hierarchical model means that we have a trickle-down set of decisions, decisions which are made at levels that are well beyond normal faculty control. Now, the assumption of faculty control is present, and the veneer of it, as we all know, is there. However, what are the usual ploys? I'll tell you one real quick. The administrator comes to you and says: "We just got $5,000. We've got to spend it by tomorrow. How should we spend it?" You know that business. Well, the faculty is going to take three or four weeks, maybe a month, to figure that out, if they're fast. The administrator says, the next day: "What have you got?" Answer: "Well, we're still meeting." So the administrator writes up whatever he wants and sends it in. It's

a last-minute exercise.

Then there's the other ploy, and I want to conclude with that. And this is the ploy: "There's no money for that. We'd like to do it! There's no money." Please remember this, if you remember nothing else from this session (but I'm sure you've all encountered it). The statement "there's no money" is a lie. The statement should be "there's no money for what you're proposing," because we all know there's money. There's money at every university. They sweep the halls. They manage to keep the doors open somehow. So there <u>is</u> money, but there's no money in the administrator's eyes for what <u>you're</u> proposing. I think our problem, in terms of maintaining our programs and trying to hold on to our limited resources, is how do we plug into these administrative structures, try to change them, try to live with them, while modifying them? And how do we tell administrators: "Here's what we want to spend money for. We know you have the money."

Peggy Sullivan:

I, too, have what I guess is not a horror story, but a story to begin with. I guess the horror part, which I should say first, is that I think I'm one of those administrators who is a career administrator. I went to Northern Illinois University [NIU] as Dean of the College of Professional Studies [now the College of Health and Human Sciences] in 1981. I went there from

being an assistant commissioner for extension services at the Chicago Public Library. I used to remind people who thought that our Provost never took risks, that he took some when he hired a woman dean with a background in public librarianship (although I had been at some universities and on faculties before that). When I went to NIU, I was responsible for programs as diverse as military science, industry and technology, nursing, communicative disorders, most of the health areas, and library and information studies, which is my own program.

Since I was Dean from 1981 until 1990, it was in a period when programs in almost all of those areas were discontinued at other places. And I realized, as time went by, the difficulty of chairs and faculty in those areas, because they would go to conferences, hear about programs that were in trouble, and be caught between wanting me to know about it because I would probably hear about it some other way and wanting me not to know about it, lest I think: "Oh, that's a good one!" In the period of time I was there, except for developing industry and technology into a College of Engineering, which for most faculty and certainly for the university as a whole was a significant step, and, I think, an improvement, we really didn't lose a program per se, but almost every one of those areas--including what was home economics when I went there and what became human and family resources--was an area that at some point was targeted elsewhere. So I had a chance to become very familiar with how this happens.

Well, I left in 1990 and became Director of University Libraries at the same university. In 1992, I became Executive Director of the American Library Association, which means that I stayed on that career path of administration. Incidentally, I felt that faculty tended to be probably more grateful to administrators and more sensitive to some of the concerns and more glad to have somebody else do it, than, say, clerks in libraries, because clerks in libraries always know how to run libraries and would rather be running it than doing what they are doing. But I thought many faculty, for example, really wanted to do what they were doing. They were glad to have me take care of the crap. So my view is just a little different than Charles Harpole's, and I want to underscore that to begin with.

But speaking specifically about librarianship, the story I really wanted to tell first was that several years ago I was a consultant to a library education program in a state neighboring Illinois. The program had never been accredited by the American Library Association, had never sought accreditation, and was not likely to do so, but they periodically invited consultants in to recommend what they should do. They were in a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and as I spoke with the Dean, he said: "Well, I want to tell you some of our problems." Incidentally, he had the Associate Dean present. That's an administrative trick with which I'm sure you're familiar. But he said, in front of the Associate Dean: "We're concerned about the library education program here, you know. It gets a lot of students. It's very

popular in the community. I ran into one of our alumnae on a plane, and in fact she's the one who said to me, 'You've got to do something about that library education program. You've got to get it accredited. You've got to do this.' She's a very shrill woman. Really, she bothered me a lot on the plane when I was trying to read. And she was telling me what I should be doing about the library education program. But it did make me think I could bring in another consultant."

So that was the reason for my being there. I said: "What else about the program?" He said: "Well, the students go out from here and they don't earn a lot of money. They work in little towns all over the state. They direct most of the public libraries here. They're mostly women and their careers are not necessarily paramount in their lives." And after I'd been there a day and had visited around, we had a further conversation and I thought: maybe it's time I find out where his values really are, so I said: "What programs in liberal arts and sciences are you proudest of?" He said: "Let me tell you about one--public administration."

I'm condensing what he said, but it was: "You know, in public administration we have all these guys who go out to towns all over this state, and they are city managers and county managers and they really control things. And they are people who provide information for their communities, and they come back to the football games, and they keep in touch with us." And I said: "Aside from gender, is there a lot of difference between public

administration and library education?" To which the Associate Dean said: "Ah! Gotcha there, Charlie!" Well, I don't like to go around gouging deans particularly, but I do think my question was relevant and that a lot of the problems of programs that have been under fire are related to who is in them as students, as faculty, and as administrators, and that we can't discuss this problem without referring to it.

Now, in library education itself, there's a developing body of disaster literature. People are apparently fascinated by why library schools close. Very often, these are faculty in those programs themselves. I've found myself wondering, if they put more energy into saving the program rather than writing about it for the library press, might something different happen? Regardless, it's somewhat helpful. There's a book some of you may know, Library School Closings [Paris]. It's about how library schools go down the tubes and what some of the characteristics are (to which I think I could add a few after a few more years' observation). In almost every case there was a false death followed by reprieve and then followed by a real closing.

I'm going to use an example where the program has not yet died but is in serious danger of that. It's the University of California at Berkeley. I realize I'm going to cover myself with disgrace if I'm not only an administrator but a site visitor who goes around making judgments, but I was on the American Library Association's site-visit accreditation team at Berkeley several

years ago. And what they boasted most to us about was that there had been a period when the library school had been removed from its building, which is the historic South Building on the UC-Berkeley campus, which you may know. They were moved out of it. It was renovated, and then it was announced that it was going to be used for something related to central administration--I think an alumni office--and the library school fought and said: "We want to go back to that building. We insist on going back to that building." Students paraded, and there were pictures of students picketing programs and administrators, and the Library School went back in that building.

Well, this is now maybe five years after that event, and the School has been studied. It's been reviewed. They've been told that they may not admit students for the next two years. They've been threatened with a closing, and they've been told they wo. close. You see, this is wonderful, because when you're in a process like that you also think: "Well, you know, we've got so-and-so in the sixth year moving toward tenure. We ought not take that position. That would be unfortunate, wouldn't it? That would be so unkind." So you don't do that, and you don't do a lot of other things that go with long-range planning and good thinking. So a lot of these things become self-fulfilling, as I see it. [Note: As of 1997, after extensive review, the Library School at Berkeley is alive, and a new Dean has been appointed.]

Meanwhile, stars--I have a particular concern about stars on faculties. I think a lot of times when there is somebody in a

department or program who has very good rapport throughout the university, everybody else leans back and says: "Nothing will happen to us as long as Joe is here." Two things about that. Joe usually can stay no matter what happens. Joe somehow sprouts another specialty if the program goes under. Joe has enough connections that if he doesn't do that, he may become an administrator. That may seem like a bad end to you, but it may be very good for him. And Joe gets saved, but the program doesn't survive. That, too, is a part of the pattern that's all too prevalent.

Another thing we need to look at is the kinds of institutions where library education programs are threatened. Typically they are the institutions that pride themselves on their research accomplishments and distinctions. They are universities that have a sense of the significance of research as compared with teaching, universities that are private rather than public. Actually, they tend to be major private universities. To give you an idea--for example, in the past decade and a half, these are among the universities where the library education programs have been closed: Columbia University, Emory University, Vanderbilt-Peabody, Case Western Reserve University, the University of Chicago, the University of Denver, the University of Southern California, and Brigham Young University, in the private group. Among the few at state universities, including one in the process of closing, are the University of Oregon, the University of Minnesota, Ball State University, and Northern

Illinois University.

Now, there's something I find intriguing about this. I was President of the American Library Association the year that the University of Minnesota was apparently in danger of losing its library education program. I thought, it's up to us, as the major library association in the United States, to help out, and indeed I do feel that professional associations have a major role to play in this, either as advocates or sometimes as the enemy, but they undoubtedly have a role to be of assistance. Anyway, I called some people who were alumni of the University of Minnesota and said: "I'm really concerned about the program there. Do you think there's something that we can do?" And their answer, word of honor, was "I don't care."

You see, this gets to the question of what the link has been between the program and its own alumni, as well as its library community. That can relate to lots of things, including placement, alumni activities, continuing education programs, and all kinds of things that can link alumni more closely. I'm not saying that programs where alumni don't feel an allegiance are the ones that go down. But I do keep thinking about those guys in public administration who come back to the football games and the women librarians who don't. I think there's a message there.

Jackie Donath:

I'm going to sound some of the same themes that my colleagues on the panel have mentioned and do it in the context of the California debacle. As I begin to analyze the current upheaval in California higher education and to think about its repercussions, the crisis, which seems at its most basic levels a matter of declining revenue and changing fiscal priorities, is actually having, and I am afraid will continue to have, a dramatic impact on both the business a d the epistemology of public education in the state and in the nation, both at the college and grammar school levels. I want to address each of those areas in turn--the idea of the business of education, and the content of a liberal education and who defines it--and I'd like to do that by reporting what's going on in California.

I've used the term "business" here quite purposely. Across the California university system, a weird version of corporate modeling and its attendant abuse of English vocabulary (with words like "impacted," "downsizing," "proactive," and academic "productivity") have gained increasing levels of power. The business of higher education in California has, since the 1960s, been organized under the charter of the "master plan"--a lovely term--which was a document that defined the mission and goals of each of the three levels of the state's higher education system. Its major goal was to provide California citizens with affordable postsecondary education, which would be available to every citizen of the state. You don't have to be a graduate of a California high school. You don't have to have even a C average.

The law mandates a certain level of state support for junior colleges in California. They are two-year institutions, which give access to people just out of high school and have a vaguely votech quality. The second-tier organization is the 22-campus Cal State system, of which I'm a member, where each campus serves a particular geographic region. These are primarily seen as teaching facilities, and they depend for 85% of their budget on the state legislature. The highest tier, of course, is the University of California system, an eight-campus research university conglomerate, which depends on the state for only 23% of its budget. It gets a lot of its money from the federal government.

Business, I think, is also a pungent metaphor for how the Chancellor of the California State University system, Barry Munitz, sees his charge. Mr. Munitz is former President of Weyerhaeuser Wood Products, which is a western lumber conglomerate, and he's notorious among his enemies as a despoiler of federal lands and an old-growth clear-cutter. That really isn't important to my story, except that in his response to a small "uprising" at San Francisco State in the fall of 1992, Chancellor Munitz used business metaphors in advocating that universities scale back their missions and become more concerned with prioritization.

Financial considerations appear to be at the heart of this call for adjustment and redirection. Between 1990 and 1992, California cut 12% from the state's education budget, which

translated into about a 10% loss for the California State system because of tuition increases (30% for students in the fall of 1992). For the next academic year, 1993-94, we expect[ed] cuts of between 5% and 7%, and tuition [went up] another 15-20%. The junior college system has raised their tuition for persons already holding degrees from $6 a credit hour to $50 a credit hour. However, if you don't have a bachelor's, you still pay $6 a credit hour. Tuition at the University of California is [more than $10,000 for the academic year 1996-97].

As these figures suggest, afforable, widespread public education and the lofty goals of the master plan have really gone by the wayside. They're victims of finances and, I think, of a conservative economic and social agenda.

At least in the past, Cal State campuses have had some measure of autonomy in how they would handle these cuts. While few campuses responded with the controversial cuts of San Diego State in the summer of 1992, that's the one that got all the press. Let me just review that one for you. It did present a worst-case scenario for everyone.

The President there urgently proposed, after consultation with the faculty senate (sort of), that he would lay off 146 tenured and 46 untenured faculty and that he would eliminate the departments of anthropology, German and Russian, religious studies, health sciences, aerospace engineering, recreation-leisure studies, family studies, industrial studies, and some natural sciences. And he would make deep cuts in chemistry,

French and Italian, sociology, health, communications and film, and art.

As you can imagine, 59% of the academic senate voted "no confidence" in this President. Fifty-six percent of the full faculty asked the Chancellor to replace him, which he did not do. The AAUP [American Association of University Professors] was invited by the California Faculty Association to examine the President's actions.

Ten other campuses in the system in the summer of 1992 announced a total layoff of about 195 tenured and tenure-track faculty, though none tried to eliminate large numbers of departments. Chancellor Munitz, through some rather creative bookkeeping and chancellorial chutzpah, found and released extra funds systemwide and, in October, offered early retirement and "golden handshake" incentives which prevented many, if any, tenured and tenure-track layoffs for the academic year 1992-93. But areas like libraries (which had already been badly beaten up), equipment purchases, and physical plant were cut as "one-time hits."

The result of this on the San Diego campus, which has the most public information (I tried to interview the deans at ten of the campuses that are close to mine--none of them would give any information about how they were doing with the budget, specifically): enrollments there dropped 4,500. They lost 1,100 sections and 600 part- and full-time employees.

As you might imagine, however, this scenario is being repeated this year with only minor variations in hysteria and browbeating, but with a slight change in rhetoric. The Chancellor's office is now pushing for so-called "proactive cuts," which would take into account permanently shrunken budgets and so-called "downsized" enrollments, so that the university faces what they are calling "deep and narrow" cuts rather than "across-the-board" cuts.

The results of the state's financial problems are felt across the three tiers of the system. For instance, there is the elimination of vacant administrative posts, but not particularly (only two in San Diego). There have been frozen searches for full-time faculty. On my campus, two people were hired in 1992-93; no one [was hired the] next year. When I started there in 1990, I was with a group of 25; the year before, it was 60. We've canceled a number of sections taught by part-time faculty and temporary employees. There is a drying up of funds for faculty research, development, travel, and adequate library collections, adequate library hours, and so on.

So on one level this was very disturbing to me, simply seeing a gigantic rape and pillage go through the system. But as I began committee work and became a more connected member of the university community, I also noticed repurcussions from the budget and how it's being handled that have troubling epistemological implications. As resources dwindle and "prioritizing" becomes the buzzword of the day, curricular issues

begin to arise. At least on my campus, this debate has an odd dialectical quality, which, on one hand, does not bode well for nontraditional and interdisciplinary programs and courses, and, on the other, causes a problem in terms of systemwide guidelines for PC courses. These are politically correct courses, unfortunately, not popular culture courses.

Programs in traditional or well-established disciplines are having some success defeating courses proposed for interdisciplinary or area studies--for instance, women's studies, speech communication, American studies, and the humanities. The battle cry is "overlap," a term which ostensibly suggests methodological, pedagogical, and epistemological encroachment but in fact seems to legitimate and disguise a fear of potential lo[illegible] of student enrollment.

For example, I sit on the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, and a speech communication course in large-group communication which made reference to anthropological terms and methods such as "ethnography" and "participant-observer" was defeated by the Anthropology Department's refusal to even consider such a course. They didn't even allow it to come to the table. Women's Studies proposed a feminist perspective on race, gender, and ethnicity, which was met by ferocious resistance from Sociology. While it passed at the Arts and Sciences curriculum level, it was held up at the next level by a Sociology petition. That's resulted in the formation of a subcommittee, on which I sit, on "overlap," which has been charged to develop guidelines

and suggestions, but no policies.

I think what this suggests is that there is a conservative definition of appropriate and centrally important knowledge that places multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and, for that matter, new ways of looking at the world as they've developed in the last twenty years or so, at a distinct disadvantage. I think this disadvantage is made even more severe by the relative youth of faculty who are engaged in these pursuits who really have no power to assert that their knowledge base is a valid one.

There's a countertrend, however, that I have to call to your attention, which is based on systemwide guidelines, as I suggested, for politically correct courses. It's a requirement in the California State system, as of 1992, that all courses must fulfill race, ethnicity, and diversity requirements as part of the general education program. However, a course in American arts and ideas from 1780 to 1990, two semesters, was not seen as broad enough. Nor was a Religious Studies course proposal on Judaism, which began with nomadic Hebrews and ended with the creation of the contemporary State of Israel.

This dialectical problem, I think, can be directly traced back to problems with the budget and departments feeling that they are attacked both from inside the university and outside. So, to conclude my quick report, I do think that, as my colleagues have suggested, there are some major problems facing popular culture studies, in their broadest definition, and I do

see, actually, a connection between the financial cutback and a conservative cultural critique.

[Addendum, 1996:] As I reviewed this manuscript, I found that remarks of all the panelists still had an unfortunate currency and continued resonance. As a matter of fact, the cuts to which I referred in my presentation, touted as "one-time-only," have become routinized. Increased funds available to the state in the form of improved tax revenues for the fiscal year 1996-1997 have been used to decrease class size in grades K-3 (though finding the teachers and classrooms to accommodate this change appears to be something of a problem).

On my campus, cancellation of courses continues to be a rule rather than an exception, and classes are dropped from the class schedule for ostensibly fiscal reasons, with little apparent concern for program planning or for the integrity of department offerings. This institutionalization of a perception of scarcity has strengthened the trends I described in 1993 and will no doubt be played out in the national arena as the United States Congress cuts funding to higher education by as much as 50% (see Cordes and Gorman). In addition, recent controversies in California surrounding affirmative action, the meaning of inclusion, and the nature of "true" citizenship in the community (both political and intellectual) can only serve to perpetuate and perhaps even deepen the crisis that alarmed us in 1993.

In an era of expanding knowledge and decreasing funding, with the demands of new technologies and calls from legislators

and administrators for improved cost/benefit ratios, it seems likely that the concerns identified by this panel in 1993 will continue to be significant issues in the academy until well into the 21st century.

Works Cited

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